

Serial No.: 09/686,516  
Attorney Docket No.: BL055-GN004  
Amendment

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Currently Amended) A method for collecting and analyzing electronic discussion messages; wherein the method comprises the computer-implemented steps of:
  - (a) collecting a plurality of message information from a plurality of pre-determined electronic discussion forums;
  - (b) storing the plurality of message information in a central data store;
  - (c) categorizing the message information according to a plurality of pre-determined rules;
  - (d) assigning an opinion rating to the plurality of message information based on a plurality of pre-determined linguistic patterns and associative rules;
  - (e) collecting a plurality of objective data from a plurality of objective data sources;
  - (f) analyzing the message information and the objective data to identify trends in the pattern of behavior in pre-determined markets and the roles of participants in electronic discussion forums; and
  - (g) generating reports for end-users based on the results of the analyses performed by the present invention.
3. (Canceled)
4. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 3,~~ A system for processing message traffic in a plurality of electronic discussion forums, comprising:
  - a computer-implemented message collector for collecting messages from the plurality of electronic discussion forums;
  - a computer-implemented message categorizer for processing the messages based on a series of topics; and

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a computer-implemented data analyzer for tracking a plurality of pseudonyms posting in the plurality of electronic discussion forums based on the processing of the messages; and

a storage device containing a database storing configuration information for the plurality of electronic discussion forums; wherein

the message collector communicates with a database storing configuration information for the plurality of electronic discussion forums the database, thereby enabling the message collector to collect messages corresponding to a plurality of message formats or communications protocols.

5. (Currently Amended) The system of claim [[3]] 4, wherein the message categorizer computes at least one relevance score for a message, the relevance score providing a measure of the relevance of the message to at least one topic for the series of topics.

6-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) ~~The system of claim 12.~~ A system for processing message traffic in a plurality of electronic discussion forums, comprising:

a computer-implemented message collector for collecting messages from the plurality of electronic discussion forums;

a computer-implemented message processor for processing the messages according to a series of topics, wherein the message processor processes a message to compute a relevance of the message to at least one topic from the series of topics;

a computer-implemented data analyzer for tracking a plurality of pseudonyms posting in the plurality of electronic discussion forums based on the processing of the messages; and

a storage device for storing the messages; wherein

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the message processor processes the messages to compute an opinion for the message based on a plurality of pre-determined linguistic patterns and associative rules according to the at least one topic.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13, wherein the opinion is computed based on a textual analysis of the message.

15-39. (Canceled)

40. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 39,~~ A method for processing message traffic in a plurality of electronic discussion forums, comprising the steps of:

collecting messages from the plurality of electronic discussion forums;

processing the messages based on a series of topics; and

tracking a plurality of pseudonyms posting in the plurality of electronic discussion forums based on the processing of the messages; and further comprising the step of

storing configuration information for the plurality of electronic discussion forums in a database, and wherein the step of collecting messages comprises collecting messages corresponding to a plurality of message formats or communications protocols.

41. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~39~~ 40, further comprising the computer-implemented step of computing at least one relevance score for a message, the relevance score providing a measure of the relevance of the message to at least one topic from the series of topics.

42-47. (Canceled)

48. (Canceled)

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49. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 48,~~ A method for processing message traffic in a plurality of electronic discussion forums, comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

collecting messages from the plurality of electronic discussion forums;

processing the messages according to a series of topics and computing a relevance of the messages to at least one topic from the series of topics; and  
tracking a plurality of pseudonyms posting in the plurality of electronic discussion forums based on the processing of the messages; wherein

the processing step further comprises the computer-implemented step of  
computing an opinion for the message based on a plurality of pre-determined linguistic patterns and associative rules according to the at least one topic.

50. (Original) The method of claim 49, wherein the step of computing an opinion comprises the step of performing a textual analysis of the message.

51-74. (Canceled)